

New Snakebite Cure Described

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Los Angeles County Health Officer

Snakebite is one of the few serious hazards that individuals may encounter while vacationing in Los Angeles County. Statistics reveal that these incidents are relatively uncommon in occurrence but snakebite is a serious thing and the victim derives little comfort from statistics.

Now, however, unpleasant as the bite may be, a new method in first aid treatment apparently lessens both the danger and the physical discomfort that generally follows the bite of any venomous snake.

This new treatment, which may replace the cut and suction method used for many years, is known as the L-C method (ligature and cryotherapy). This simply means the use of a constricting band and the therapeutic application of cold.

The method was devised by Dr. Herbert L. Stahnke, an Arizona scientist who reported his work in last year's January issue of the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. The procedure has revolutionized the treatment of venomous bites and stings in Arizona and is now widely used and recommended by health officials and medical practitioners throughout that region.

Assuming the bite is on the hand, foot or leg, a constricting band is placed a short distance above the puncture wound immediately after the bite occurs. Since the idea is to slow down the flow of venous blood back to the heart and yet permit the

free circulation of arterial blood, it is important not to have the band too tight. A regular constricting band, like those that come with snakebite kits, is fine but a shoe-lace or heavy piece of string will do very well.

A piece of ice is then placed over the site of the bite while a quantity of ice and water is obtained and put in a container large enough to permit immersion of the limb well beyond the ligature. After five minutes of immersion, the band may be removed. The limb must be kept in lead water for at least two hours.

If the rattler happens to be large, or the victim a small child, this treatment may have to be kept up 14 to 20 hours. Should the bite be on the body, a large ice-pack of finely crushed ice is used.

It is very important that the patient be kept warm while this treatment is going on so that circulation throughout the body, with the exception of the poisoned limb, remains good. However, whiskey, or other alcoholic stimulants which speed up the circulation, should be avoided.

These first aid measures prevent the venom from traveling through the system in amounts that are large enough to overwhelm the body's natural defenses.

The ligature confines the poison to the site of the bite until the temperature of the region is lowered enough to cause constriction of the blood vessels. This permits very slow passage of the venom into the system

More Investments for State Wildlife Needed

When California has some three million hunters and fishermen in 1966, the state's wildlife resources won't continue to hold up without financial investments in addition to expected license sale revenues. The authority is Director Seth Gordon of the California Department of Fish and Game. He told members of four legislative committees at a recent joint meeting in Sacramento that an additional capital investment of \$42,565,000 will be needed in the next 10 years to maintain fish and game resources.

The four committees are studying plans under which the state's share of tidelands oil royalties can best be spent. They are the Assembly subcommittee on public lands, grazing and forest practice, the Senate interim committee on public lands, the Assembly committee on agriculture and the Assembly committee on conservation, planning and public works.

where it is so diluted with body fluids that its deadly potency is mitigated.

Campers, hikers or other persons who might get bitten by rattlers cannot, however, travel around with supplies of ice.

So Dr. Stahnke experimented with ethyl chloride, the substance used to anesthetize the skin in local operations, and found it most effective. It has the advantage of chilling the skin more quickly than ice and may also be carried by people going into snake-infested country since it may be purchased in small metal containers each of which contains enough for a 30-minute treatment. Several such tubes allows time for the victim to get either to ice or to a doctor for anti-venom treatment.

An area approximately 3 inches around, including the wound, should be sprayed. Care must be taken not to freeze the tissues, stopping at the appearance of frost on the skin and repeating the process when it disappears.

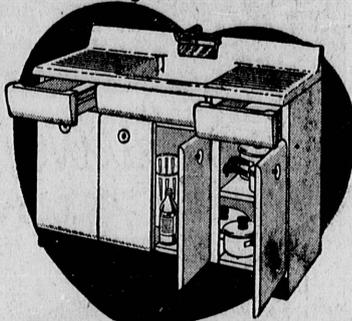
The old cutting and suction method is largely ineffective. The victim suffers intense pain as the venom progresses through the body, and the cutting sometimes results in a bad secondary infection or in the severing of a tendon—always a difficult repair job. The simplicity of Dr. Stahnke's method recommends it. There are no ill after-effects and, after the first five minutes, little or no pain.

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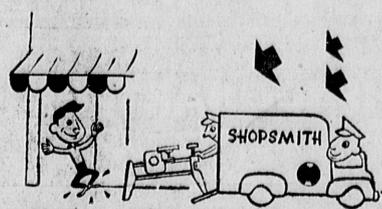
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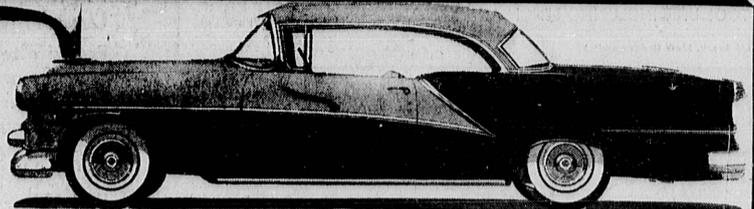
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